



Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation: The End of Slavery in America by Allen C. Guelzo

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The Journal of American History, Vol. 91, No. 4 (Mar., 2005), pp. 1465-1466

Published by: [Organization of American Historians](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3660234>

Accessed: 15/12/2014 07:50

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seas observers such as Carwardine seem especially attuned to the fact that only in nineteenth-century America could a career path such as Lincoln's have been followed, but Carwardine also gives special focus to Lincoln's skill, both as rising politician and as president, in making use of the democratic mechanisms available to him in gaining and retaining power and ultimately in managing the war effort. Lincoln's success as a political leader, says Carwardine, owed much to his personal talent and drive, but also to his sensitivity to public opinion, his facility as a communicator, and his ability to manage "the often unstable and fractious elements that made up the political parties to which he belonged" (p. xiii). Furthermore, more than most authors, Carwardine stresses the religiously skeptical Lincoln's appeal nonetheless to reform-minded and antislavery Northern evangelical Protestants, whose mobilization in his support may well have been critical to his gaining and holding the presidential office.

Carwardine believes that Lincoln's possibly greatest achievement was a result of his skillful reading of Northern public opinion. Always antislavery because of the violence done by the peculiar institution to the Declaration of Independence's pledge of equal rights to all, and at the same time always conscious of the limits of presidential power, Lincoln was able to bring the Union popular majority to a position similar to his by his timing of the Emancipation Proclamation. He was thus able simultaneously to placate impetuous radicals, border state conservatives, and the intervening electoral mainstream. Carwardine also notes the coincidence of Lincoln's progress toward emancipation with his increasing religiosity, moving from skepticism to a humble acceptance of divine will, which reached its fullest expression with the second inaugural address.

Informed by the most recent scholarship and by insights derived from a valuable transatlantic perspective, Carwardine's book is certain to become an indispensable component of the Lincoln canon. It stands out among the many great Lincoln books that have been published recently. No reader, scholar or layman,

with a serious interest in Abraham Lincoln can afford to neglect this biography.

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Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation: The End of Slavery in America. By Allen C. Guelzo. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004. xviii, 332 pp. \$26.00, ISBN 0-7432-2182-6.)

Allen C. Guelzo's work is a richly detailed account of how Abraham Lincoln charted a middle course to the Emancipation Proclamation. Guelzo argues that a proper understanding of the Emancipation Proclamation must recognize that Lincoln was "our last Enlightenment politician" (p. 3), whose commitment to the virtue of prudence required a careful balance among his desire for emancipation, the presidency's constitutional authority, and the political realities of the Civil War. If Lincoln was a prudent man, then the text suggests that he was the only prudent man. Guelzo's Lincoln is an embattled leader, his critics and friends constantly offering conflicting advice, to which the president responded with measured thought and action. The author avoids the romanticism of some biographies by juxtaposing Lincoln with a second protagonist, the act of emancipation, as Republicans, slaveholders, and the slaves themselves perceived it.

The first chapter uses the varied agendas of congressional Republicans and the unorthodox tactics of Union officers to identify three methods for emancipation: accepting blacks as contraband, the confiscation of confederate slaves, and emancipation through martial law. Guelzo contends that Lincoln disliked these methods because he anticipated that the Supreme Court or the border states would make them untenable. He preferred gradual emancipation with compensation; unfortunately, as the second chapter illustrates, this tactic met with little success. When the self-interests of George McClellan and the border states jeopardized Lincoln's modest proposal, he moved to a more assertive position. Chapter 3 claims that the president's war aims and his sense of morality converged sometime around the Sec-

ond Confiscation Act and McClellan's victory at Antietam; consequently, Lincoln drafted an executive proclamation that freed the Confederacy's slaves. Chapter 4 examines the preliminary emancipation proclamation's reception and Lincoln's continued hope that the slave states might accept compensated emancipation, thereby ending the war and achieving freedom. Although the Emancipation Proclamation was not his first choice, Lincoln believed that it was his best choice, and he trusted history to resolve the legal and social problems that remained. Guelzo argues in chapter 5 that Lincoln's faith was well placed. The proclamation succeeded because it eliminated any chance of slavery's survival.

Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation is a significant contribution to the history of the political and military events that surrounded the Emancipation Proclamation. The book's only weakness is that it never develops the concept of prudence that marks its introduction; it does not define prudence with reference to the specific beliefs or actions of the president. This omission makes it difficult to appreciate Guelzo's dismissal of the alternatives that Lincoln opposed in 1861 and 1862. Why, for example, are Lincoln's methods prudent while the author censures the actions of John C. Frémont and Simon Cameron? The text's attention to detail and multiple voices makes it an important work, but it does not explain Lincoln's special genius because it does not identify the uniquely prudential elements of his political judgment.

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Lincoln's Last Months. By William C. Harris. (Cambridge: Belknap, 2004. xii, 303 pp. \$27.95, ISBN 0-674-01199-6.)

Lincoln's Sanctuary: Abraham Lincoln and the Soldiers' Home. By Matthew Pinsker. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003. xvi, 256 pp. \$30.00, ISBN 0-19-516206-4.)

Race relations, war, and religion; the superiority of free institutions to systems of dependency; political intelligence and statesmanship

of the highest order for the sake of republican union and liberty: little wonder that the life of Abraham Lincoln, defined by this manifold of subjects, remains of historical interest. These new works by William C. Harris and Matthew Pinsker affirm Lincoln's enduring appeal, almost in defiance of changing cultural tastes. Unselfconsciously—that is to say, neither apologetically nor with academic conceit—Harris and Pinsker address a general readership, in addition to Lincoln specialists. Their books are expository narratives intended to inform, not rhetorical arguments designed to persuade.

Harris's *Lincoln's Last Months* is an account of political and military events from July 1864 to Lincoln's assassination. It is an enlargement, in part, of the picture presented by Harris in *With Charity for All: Lincoln and the Restoration of the Union* (1997). Harris's thesis is that Lincoln was committed to a policy permitting "a large measure of self-reconstruction" by Southern whites, which would enable the seceded states to "regain all of their rights in the Union" (p. 100). This was a conservative policy, and it was implicit in the fundamental Northern war aim of preserving the Constitution and restoring the Union. For military reasons Lincoln found it necessary to emancipate slaves, a decision from which he recognized there could be no turning back. Nevertheless, Harris believes Lincoln never wavered from the fundamental policy of allowing Southern white Unionists to control their states' relationship with the freed slaves.

Harris's emphasis on self-reconstruction raises the question of how the freed slaves' personal liberty and civil rights were to be guaranteed. Harris says that by 1864 Lincoln had "developed considerable empathy for blacks" (p. 4). He assumed they would exercise civil rights, gradually ascending "to first-class citizenship" as white prejudice against blacks faded (p. 214). Had Lincoln lived to deal with postwar conditions, he "perhaps would have grasped the reality of the situation for the former slaves" (*ibid.*). Using his political skills and influence, he might have insisted that Southern Unionists protect black freedom in their states. Harris is reasonably certain that Lincoln's commitment to completing the